

WASHINGTON – Connecticut Senators Joe Lieberman and Richard Blumenthal and Representatives John Larson and Rosa DeLauro announced Thursday that the South Fire District in Middletown has been awarded \$114,350 to improve operations and safety within the department. The grant is funded through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Assistance to Firefighters Grant program (AFG). Middletown will use the award to purchase updated equipment and provide additional training to its first responders.

"Middletown's first responders have courageously answered the call to action with an unwavering commitment to their duty, time and time again. Their dedication to our safety has earned the men and women of the South Fire District our trust as we continue to turn to them during times of crisis," said **Lieberman**. "I am deeply honored to be able to announce this grant as a way of showing these brave men and women that their acts of valor have not gone unnoticed."

"These grants affirm our commitment to our first responders and our appreciation for their bravery, sacrifice, and courage in routinely putting themselves in harm's way to keep our communities safe," said **Blumenthal**. "As we continue to get our fiscal house in order, I am heartened that support for our first responders, evidenced by this operations and safety grant for Middletown, continues to be a national priority."

"After much of Middletown was left in the dark during last Halloween's blizzard, our brave firefighters rose to the occasion and were there for the community," **Larson** said. "These individuals are not just our first and only line of defense against the outbreak of deadly fires, but they are our friends, families and neighbors. Every day they put on the uniform they risk their lives to protect our own and they deserve the best equipment available. I look forward to working with Mayor Drew and the rest of our delegation to ensure that we continue to work to provide them with the funding they need to continue the excellent work we have come to expect from them."

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**DeLauro** said: "These vital funds will help ensure that the first responders of the South Fire District have the support and the equipment that they need. These brave men and women are the front lines in protecting our communities every day, and we must provide them with the tools

to do so effectively and safely. I am enormously proud of South Fire's firefighters, and all of our first responders, and look forward to their continued good service."

Lieberman has a long history of advocating for fire safety. In 2000 and 2003, respectively, he was a cosponsor of the FIRE and SAFER Acts and on March 10, 2011, introduced the Fire Grant Reauthorization Act of 2011, legislation that reauthorizes the AFG and SAFER programs for five years. Since the FIRE and SAFER Acts were signed into law, FEMA has distributed 671 grants for a total of over \$78 million in Connecticut to help fire departments strengthen their response capabilities. Lieberman is also a Co-Chair of the Congressional Fire Caucus for the 112th Congress.

Blumenthal has fought to ensure the fair provision of survivor benefits to the spouses and families of police officers and firefighters who have been injured, or lost their lives, in the line of duty.

Larson, a strong supporter of first responders and their families, has sponsored a number of pieces of legislation to honor the men and women that serve their communities including, most recently, a bill to amend the U.S. law that would allow American Flags to fly at half mast to honor first responders who give their lives in the line of duty.

DeLauro has been a strong supporter of first responders and firefighters on the House Appropriations Committee and fought to protect these grants from severe cuts.

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